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# Food and Home Notes

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Sour half-and-half may be used in place of sour cream in many recipes — even in making cakes and cookies that contain fat in addition to sour cream.

\* \* \*

Remember to use low oven temperatures for baking casseroles containing a high proportion of milk. High temperatures cause the milk to coagulate in a film and a coating on sides of the pan.

\* \* \*

Whipping cream is easiest to whip when it is chilled to between 35- and 40 F. For best results, chill bowl and beaters as well as the cream suggest USDA home economists.

\* \* \*

To sweeten whipped cream: Add sugar at the rate of 2 to 4 tablespoons for each cup of unwhipped cream used. But don't add sugar until whipping is completed.

\* \* \*

Fresh dairy products are highly perishable. Keep them clean, cold and tightly covered.

## CLOTHING COST...UP, UP...UP

In a decade, American consumers have doubled their spending for clothing, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture study. Back in 1964, consumers put out less than \$19 billion for women's and children's clothing and \$10 billion for men and boys' clothing. But — by 1973, spending had jumped to almost \$39 billion for women's and children's clothing, and \$21 billion for men's and boys' clothing.

Department stores remained the most popular clothing outlet — in 1963 close to 40% of women's and girls' clothing was sold there, along with a third of men's and boys' clothing. In 1973, department stores covered over 44% of the market for women's and girls' clothing and 39% for men's and boys' clothing.

Consumption and production of fibers showed the shift in clothing purchases — cotton, wool, rayon, and acetate fibers lost ground to non-cellulosic fibers, such as polyesters.

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## COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (April 1976)

	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate- cost-plan	Liberal plan
FAMILIES				
Young couple.....	\$22.20	\$28.90	\$36.30	\$43.70
Elderly couple.....	19.90	25.60	31.80	38.20
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	31.60	40.80	50.80	61.10
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	38.20	49.30	61.80	74.40
INDIVIDUALS*				
Women				
20-54 years.....	9.10	11.70	14.60	17.50
55 years and over.....	8.20	10.50	13.00	15.50
Men				
20-54 years.....	11.10	14.60	18.40	22.20
55 years and over.....	9.90	12.80	15.90	19.20
Children				
1-2 years.....	5.20	6.60	8.10	9.70
3-5 years.....	6.20	7.90	9.70	11.70
6-8 years.....	8.00	10.20	12.80	15.40
9-11 years.....	10.00	12.80	16.00	19.30
Girls 12-19 years.....	9.50	12.10	15.00	18.00
Boys 12-14 years.....	10.60	13.60	17.00	20.50
15-19 years.....	11.70	15.00	18.80	22.70

\* Cost of food at home for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

Note: Single copies of papers describing USDA's thrifty food plan (used in setting the coupon allotment in the Food Stamp Program) and the three more costly plans, on which these costs are based, are available from the Consumer and Food Economics Institute, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

## IN THE MARKET BASKET

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### COMPARE, COMPARE

Convenience food costs more? Not necessarily...if you squeeze your own orange juice it may cost you 12 cents for a 4 oz. glass -- if you fix it from a frozen concentrate it costs slightly more than 4 cents...and canned orange juice might run 6½ cents a glass. Lemon juice -- is also cheapest in the ready-squeezed form, according to a recent survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

One-third of the convenience foods costs less than similar dishes made "from scratch" according to a recent survey of 160 foods. Canned or frozen peas offer a big savings -- fresh peas would cost about 27 cents a dish; canned or frozen would cost about 11 cents a serving. Froze limas are the cheapest at about 11 cents a serving, with canned about 14 cents -- and fresh almost 29 cents. A best buy? Try the economics of frozen spinach at 11 cents a serving, canned at 13 cents and fresh at nearly 25 cents.

Are pies cheaper by the dozen? Only if you make them at home -- reveals the survey. A homemade apple pie slice costs about 12½ cents; one from a piecrust mix and canned apple pie filling, nearly 18 cents; frozen 20 cents and ready baked 24 cents. You like cherry or coconut cream? Cheaper if you make them at home too, --believe it or not.

Main-dish convenience dinners means you do pay for the convenience -- a frozen beef dinner that costs 79 cents (in 1974-75) would have cost 51 cents if made at home. Or -- the frozen turkey dinner would have cost about 29½ cents to make.

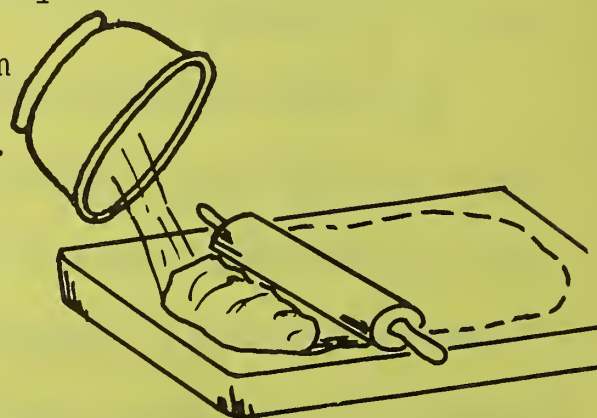
But -- some of the skillet main-dish mixes can offer a good price break. The ERS survey found that lasagna mix was over 9 cents a serving less than the homemade version, and tuna noodle casserole mix, 3 cents cheaper.



## IN THE MARKET BASKET (CON'T)

Canned spaghetti or a package mix came out cheaper than homemade by over 6 cents — probably due to the less expensive cheeses used. The seafood area offers some convenient food bargains — crabcakes average 8 cents cheaper than freshly prepared ones — frozen or canned shrimp was about 11 cents less than fresh. Shrimp newburg costs 69 cents a portion if you made your own, but \$1.13 if you bought it frozen.

Knowing what you're willing to pay for — convenience, time and energy — will help you decide what to buy. No comparisons for nutritive value or culinary skills, equipment and time involved in food preparation has been considered in this survey. But — it's interesting to know that working from "scratch" is not always the cheapest way to plan. You still need to compare and watch what you're buying.



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